

HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION MEETING
APPROVED Minutes
April 15, 2021

Meeting occurred via WebEx Teleconferencing

Chair Scott Markow called meeting to order at 7:06 p.m.

Commissioners Present: Scott Markow, (Chair), Bianca Chang (Vice Chair), Mabrooka Chaudhry, Lynda Earle, Bob Ford, Peter Hwang, Joshua Kaufmann, Gabriel Terrasa, Kui Zhao and Jonathon Di Pietro (Student Commissioner).

Absent: None

Staff Present: Yolanda F. Sonnier (Executive Secretary) and Chaunta Taylor (Recording Secretary)

Legal Counsel: Melissa Goldmeier

Public Attendees Present: None

I. PUBLIC FORUM
None

II. APPROVAL OF MARCH 18, 2021 MINUTES
Bob made a motion to approve the March 18, 2021 minutes, and Peter seconded the motion. All Commissioners in attendance voted in favor of accepting the March 18, 2021 minutes, as distributed. The March 18, 2021 minutes were approved.

III. CHAIR'S REPORT – SCOTT
Scott discussed the following items that were submitted in his written report that was emailed to the commission.

- March 23rd the County Executive (CEX) terminated their contract with ICE. The CEX had a press conference and mentioned he was less concerned about the detainees being sent to other detention centers under the new Presidential Administration.
- March 24th several commissioners, including Scott, attended the Rally Against Hate. April 8th the letter to the editor on hate crimes against the Asian, Hispanics, Pacific Islanders, and Immigrants communities was published in the Howard County Times
- Governor Hogan implemented a State-wide workgroup to prevent hate crimes on the American Asian Pacific Islanders (AAPI) community.

Scott asked the commissioners if they haven't already shared, to please share with their network that HRC has 2 commissioner and 1 student vacancy; the deadline is Friday.

Scott asked Yolanda if there were any Website updates and has a meeting been scheduled. Yolanda stated due to the magnitude and time restraints deadline from CEX we haven't scheduled a meeting to discuss the website with members of HRC.

Scott asked the commission if they wanted to weigh in on having the June or July meeting in person and he will send out a poll for anonymous votes.

Kui reminded the commission that the Housing and Community Development Director will be presenting a presentation at the June meeting. Kui mentioned that Howard County Conservancy offered to allow HRC to use their facilities last year for the award ceremony. Kui stated we could consider that facility as well.

Bob stated that he is fully vaccinated, and others will probably be vaccinated soon, and that should eliminate some of the COVID concerns. Bob stated he hopes the commissioners can meet in person before the end of the year. Joan stated she agrees with Bob and is open to an in-person meeting.

Scott mentioned we won't vote on tonight's meeting, he will send out a poll for those who don't feel comfortable discussing it during the meeting. We can then make a final decision at the next meeting.

Bianca reminded the commission that we should caution that even if you are fully vaccinated, we should still wear masks in person. Bianca mentioned she attended the AAPI Stop Asian rally on March 4, 2021, and she also participated in a webinar focusing on stopping hate crime for Asian Americans. Through panel discussions, speakers, Q&A and other modes, these webinars hosted at different agencies and levels share resources, best practices, strategies and community support to participants. There were great topics and highlights out of such discussions. Bianca suggested OHRE take the lead to host similar webinars.

Yolanda asked Bianca if she could clarify exactly what information. Bianca responded, having a panel meeting to discuss how residents react when they find themselves in an unsafe situation in public. How should they handle these issues; should they call 911? Scott responded if someone is being victimized, they should contact the police. Yolanda responded at the last AAPI workgroup meeting in April, Officer Stella Dieu did a presentation on safety concerns, Hate Bias incidents, how to protect your business and how to protect your home, as well as being vigilant when you're out in public. Yolanda stated Officer Dieu is willing to host a presentation for the community. Bianca stated interest in the community for more information is great.

Joan suggested the presentation with Officer Dieu could be repeated as the session was educational and well presented. Scott mentioned maybe we could record and post, allowing people to view at their leisure. Lynda stated she agrees, the feedback from the presentation was well received and she's happy to do another presentation to educate the community.

IV. EXECUTIVE SECRETARY REPORT

Yolanda mentioned Chaunta has resigned from OHRE to be effective April 22, 2021. Yolanda mentioned Chaunta will assist the HRC until April 21, 2021. Yolanda also mentioned that there are two other open positions in the OHRE (Compliance Officer and Intake Officer). Scott asked will HRC be getting a replacement. Yolanda responded she will be the replacement until the position is posted and the office hires a new person. Scott asked will the commission still be able to utilize the HRC email address to communicate with the office. Yolanda responded yes, this is a general email address and it was setup for continuity when the staff leaves the office.

Yolanda mentioned, she had a few more updates:

- OHRE staff attended the Asian Hate Rally, there was a subsequent issue that came out of that rally. There appeared to be discrimination allegations between the Asian and Hindu community.
- CEX did a press release announcing Juneteenth is now an official county holiday
- OHRE is currently interviewing for the Equity Program Coordinator position which will support Dr. Denise Boston.
- An invite was sent out for the April 21st presentation. Dr. Boston will be giving a presentation for OHRE Commissions and Workgroups on building an equitable community. Yolanda asked the commissioners to let her know if their invite wasn't received.
- Dr. Boston will also be giving a presentation on a Leadership audit, which will be done in several stages.
- There were 6 HBI incidents reported for March. Lynda asked Yolanda if she could give details about the incidents. Details were given for each incident by Yolanda.
- LGTBQ Workgroup had their final meeting. The group was established by an executive order for 18 months and expired April 1st. The workgroup submitted their report to the CEX recommending that the workgroup become a permanent commission.

Gab discussed the La Alianza workgroup, mentioning the following:

- The workgroup meets quarterly and is divided amongst 3 committees:
- 1) Education 2) Healthcare 3) Economic and Workforce Development.
- Gab mentioned he's a part of the economic and workforce development committees.
- Some of the committees meet monthly; his committees meet twice a month and they met last Tuesday.
- The workgroup hasn't had a quarterly meeting in a while, he's unable to discuss what the other two committees are working on.
- The Economic and Workforce Development Committee is going through data to see what issues need to be addressed within the Latino community.

Yolanda mentioned she had a few more items to report:

- The MLK Commission is having a Pop-Up pantry Friday, April 16th at 8:30am-11:30 am.
- The Indian Cultural Association gives free food away on Saturdays through April at the Miller Branch Library from 10:30am-12:30pm.
- April 16, 2021 Glen_Mar Church will be giving away 300 boxes of fresh produce from 4pm -6pm in their parking lot.
- The Howard County Police Dept. is accepting applications for their Summer Youth Program.
- There is a mobile COVID testing bus that stops at five sites throughout the County from 3pm-7pm Monday – Friday.

V. STUDENT REPORT

Jonathan stated his report this meeting was brief and mentioned next month's report will be longer as he will be presenting the yearly project and research, I've been working on the last couple of months which would include his recommendations on how to address; the research being HBIs in the school system. He will share how these incidents effect youth, how they can report them, the current lack of reporting and what the commission should do in trying to address it. He made a personal

announcement he's committed to American University with an interest in international relations and legal studies starting in the fall. On April 12th he met with the HRC Hate Crimes and Criminal Justice Committee and for the past month has been working with HCPSS and student leaders to address some things brought up by DAIC advocating for an increase in diverse e-books, especially on history to be available to students. This is an effort to try to increase a diverse point of view promoting critical thinking and contributing to an atmosphere of debate in a well-rounded education when it comes to historical and multi-cultural perspectives, additionally trying to help students be involved in teacher orientations, specifically new teacher orientations, regarding biases and dealing with student discipline. This should be giving a good environment where teachers will be able to truly understand how their relationships with students are being affected and help students feel how certain situations should be dealt with. On April 27th I'll attend the Diversity Equity Inclusion Advisory Committee meeting for HCPSS; this month we'll be discussing professional development and professional learning for staff. This is a very important meeting when it comes to one of the things that we've been researching for the past year regarding reporting of HBIs in the school system. When it comes to professional development, I think that will be one of the places where they can try to increase the amount of knowledge and the infrastructure around reporting HBIs in the school system. He'll also be able to provide what they discussed with the HCPSS central office during his longer report next month.

Kui asked Jonathan if his report for next month would basically focus on HBIs, Johnathan confirmed. She made it known she would be interested in inviting him as a guest speaker to a community. Kui informed the committee the school system is seeking candidates for a position of Equity Initiatives for School Leadership. Johnathan remembered he had sent an email to HCPSS informing them of the student and adult vacancies on the HRC Commission. HCPSS has forwarded that info to students. Jonathan also has received several questions and has referred inquiries to the website.

VI. COMMITTEE REPORTS

a. Legislation:

Scott mentioned he sent out a written report earlier today and stated the state legislative session closed earlier in the week. There were several bills that passed both houses but have not yet been presented to the Governor. The deadline for presentation to the Governor is May 2nd. There is still some on-going legislative effort. The most notable one not on our previous report is the state legislature overrode the Governor's veto on the MD Police Accountability Act which does several things including repealing the officers bill of rights, prohibits police officers from preventing citizens from recording, provides certain training for police officers on how to deal with the public, requires body cameras by July 2023, for all police officers in the state it creates a system to identify police officers who are a risk of using excessive force, greatly curtails the use of no knock search warrants, and requires certain record keeping. There's also a bill that passed both houses and may be sent to the Governor in time for the May 2ND deadline that adds the term sexual orientation in the context of hate crimes to include gender identity and to kind of broaden the scope of what constitutes a hate crime based on sexual orientation. There were two bills that passed the county this past month which will be up for the county CEX signature should he decide to sign it: 1) Require single user restrooms in Howard County be made available to all individuals regardless of gender, gender identity, etc. It was amended to also include county buildings as there was an exemption for that originally the bill. 2) Allow landlords to show model units to respective tenants and provide certain protections for tenants to be able to terminate leases. Jonathan added there was also an immigrant rights bill that was passed out of the GA that's likely to get a Hogan veto, but they believe it's going to make it through before the May/June dead line to get an override. It has a variety of protections

that are added into it when it comes to immigration; one big thing is an increase when it comes to sanctuary cities in classes across the entire state.

b. Outreach:

Mabrooka mentioned not much to report. Talked about attendance at virtual event hosted by Kui titled Preventing Crime and Understanding Hate. It was a good event with important information which will be included in the HBI report. Attended AAPI workgroup meeting – asked to serve as the Chairperson of the Health and Wellness Committee and agreed. Next meeting is in July and the committee will be getting organized. Will report back to the commission.

Bianca asked if any virtual AAPI celebrations or events are planned May of this year. Mabrooka stated May is AAPI Heritage month and they were asked for two ideas from the CEX's office. Not many ideas were shared but informed them she has a lot of contacts throughout the school system with student groups that are interested in participating and sharing their heritage so I did offer to put them in touch with leadership of student groups throughout the county whether; these are Asian Student Unions, South Asian Student Unions, international clubs, etc. They would like to participate by submitting poems and narratives to celebrate their heritage. The CEX office could highlight those submissions. The other offer from the students' perspectives is they'd love to have a Town Hall meeting with the CEX. The ask was to keep it open for anytime of the year if it doesn't happen in May. Invite the students and ask them what their concerns are.

c. Awards:

The Awards Committee met on March 29th.

Yolanda and Chaunta joined the committee for this meeting and we're grateful for all their help. Isolated dates for event are 10/19, 10/21 and 10/26 as potential dates. CEX is available all three. Considering Maryland Conservancy again this year. Discussed a plan "B" in case of a COVID spike or another unforeseen reason we are unable to meet at this location. Yolanda suggested we schedule a date of 9/25 to record the event if things change. We discussed nomination questions and forms from last year and realized it was a bit confusing with people getting mixed up on the word nominator and nominee. Gab was kind enough to work on the wording and I did include that in the report so that we can be more concise and clarify what the nominee is, that being the person who is receiving the award. We gave a three hundred word or less option in terms of writing about why you think a person should be nominated. Additionally, we talked about potential names for the awards, the awards being an individual award, we have new student award (last year was the first time we had a new student award) and an organization. Yolanda was kind enough to speak with administration about the names Jim Henson for the individual award. Jim Henson is someone who was a prior administrator for the OHR. Dr. Murray Simon is someone who worked very closely with the Latino student community to ensure their progression. He also worked with Rev. Walter Rodriguez. Then we had Colette Roberts whom we thought would be a good name for the organization because she founded or co-founded PFLAG in Howard County. We had one more name that came up during the meeting which was Jean Toomer, the first female Administrator of the Office of Human Rights. Thus, the committee thought it might be a good idea to make it the Henson-Toomer Award for an individual. We've reached out to Howard High School ROTC for the color guard again this year but have not heard back from them. I believe Altholton High School has a ROTC Program as well and I will reach out to them. Bianca is checking with other schools who might have ROTC. Gab reached out to Hammond High School's Choir Director who is interested in participating in the program. We're hoping they can provide singing the National Anthem, a selection, or both.

We hope to close nominations in August and bring them to the full commission in September. We worked on the confusion from last year with regards to the understanding of the word nominator and

nominee; that has been cleared up by Gab. Potential names for individual award, new student award, and the student organization were discussed. Yolanda spoke with CEX about the names Jim Henson, Dr. Murray Simon and Colet Roberts. All the names have been approved by CEX. Scott asked are you prepared to present dates for a vote.

10/21 commission meeting date – not know how many hearings we may have least preferred.

10/26 – Bianca has a conflict on this date. Preferred is 10/19 and 10/21.

Lynda made a motion for holding the awards ceremony on 10/19, Joan 2nd, all in favor. Hoping the awards will be in person on that date.

Lynda mentioned the commissioner to agree on award name, Lynda move to motion individual Henson-Toomer. Joan asked some people naming award from a family and come present award, are we going have someone to come. Yolanda stated it may be hard to get full names on an award. Lynda asked is it inappropriate to have a dual name. Jonathan asked is it possible to have award named after their full name and its referred to Henson-Toomer award.

Lynda motion individual award be named “Henson and Toomer Award”, instead of “Henson/Toomer”, Gab 2nd. The vote was unanimous.

Student award: Lynda motion student award be named “Dr. Murray Simon Award” - Gab 2nd.

Dr. Murray Simon was a student advocate, specifically for the Latino community.

Rev. Walter Rodriguez – was a cofounder with Dr. Simon, however unsure if Rev. Rodriguez did just as much as Dr. Simon. Joan asked in the program will there be context about the individuals.

Yolanda asked what the difference was from the founder and co-founder. Scott called the vote and the vote unanimously passed.

The organization award be called the “Colette Roberts Award”- Lynda made a motion with Bob 2nd the motion. The vote was unanimous.

d. Nominating:

Peter mentioned all paper application score 1-10. Will interview the first 5 and would recommend the single top score, if tie we would send the tie. Discussed specific round will commission delegate rather getting a full commission vote. Scott stated we tabled it.

Peter stated we need to decide, because Chaunta said the deadline is tomorrow, but we only have 3 commissioner and 6 student applications. Peter motion the commission to delegate the right to recommend to CEX who to appoint. Kui 2nd motion.

Bianca asked if the application was 100 percent online. Scott asked if you only get 3 application and you are not satisfied with candidate, then what steps will you take. Peter stated we will not recommend anyone we do not feel confident about. If we’re not satisfied, we will not. Scott asked would you go back to previous candidates, Peter stated that’s a good idea, but will interview the 3 commissioners. Bianca asked are we using the model going forward. Peter said yes unless someone wanted to change it.

e. Hate Crimes and Criminal Justice:

Mabrooka mentioned, Officer Dieu and the role hate bias versus hate crimes. The key message is and ask your community the recording. It’s so important don’t second guess call and record it whether it

is a hate crime versus hate bias. If it's not a crime a police officer speaks to the person is enough to prevent future incident. There are many individuals that speak various languages and can help with translation when needed. With her report she submitted a flyer and to please share with your community. She shared a PowerPoint and it's not official HC presentation and needs approval before we can pass it on. The committee has made a commitment to collect data and do a deep dive into the data. Hopefully useful recommendations can be made from collecting the data. Kui mentioned to remember that the Asian community feel that they have to be or choose to be silent when it comes to reporting.

f. Social and Economic Justice:

Kui mentioned 3 items to report. 3/18 translate vaccine flyer and Bianca then did her version. Director of Housing will be doing a presentation about CEX housing and masterplan. Attended National Origin Conference and there were 2 people from FIRN, Mike Mitchell and Danielle, that joined. Jesse Eulene, Yolanda and Denise Boston had a conference about diversity. Kui invited Mike and Danielle to come to September meeting to present to HRC. Kelly Cimino, the director of housing, will be speaking at the June meeting.

g. Immigration:

Joan mentioned, we will follow up with CEX on record on status on the code. Follow up with Jennifer Jones because she had background in it. Send Jennifer correspondence to setup meeting. But the priority will be nominating committee. Will report back at May meeting. Most likely after May 9th. Peter had nothing to add.

VII. ELECTION – CORRESPONDANCE SECRETARY

Scott reminded everyone about the election for the role of Corresponding Secretary in order to nominate someone for this position, replacing Josh. Opened the floor up for nominations – Kui nominated Mabrooka. Mabrooka declined because she is already on too many committees and would not have time. Bianca nominated Gab. Gab accepted. Peter 2nd Gab. Kui also nominate Joan. Joan declined and wants to support Gab. Scott nominate Lynda, but Lynda declined and will support Gab. Peter motion Gab as new Corresponding Secretary. All in favor.

VIII. NEW BUSINESS/ANNOUNCEMENTS

Bob brought up an issue with Yolanda where if there is a way to bring up pronouns in WebEx. Yolanda stated she will make the request with DTCS. Kui mentioned, award ceremony May Ward Director for HC Conservancy and can contact the facility. Yolanda stated it should be reserved already by Chaunta for October 19.

IX. CLOSED SESSION

Closed session was called to discuss appeal cases, HRC2103001 and HRC2103002. Joan made a motion to go into close session Bob 2nd the motion. All commissioners in attendance unanimously agreed to go into closed session.

X. ADJOURNMENT

Motion to adjourn the meeting made by Joan and 2nd by Lynda. All Commissioner voted in favor of adjourning the meeting.